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INFO ONLY AMBASSADORS AND SECRETARY

Please deliver following message to Chancellor:

QTE Dear Mr. Chancellor:

You will have seen accounts in the press today of the prospect of a meeting between Mr. Khrushchev and myself. I want you to know the background which has given rise to these press accounts and the prospects for such a meeting.

The question of a personal meeting between Mr. Khrushchev and myself arose in the talks which our Ambassador in Moscow had with Mr. Khrushchev in the period after my Administration came into office. I indicated then that I hoped to make a trip to Europe perhaps in the late Spring when the opportunity might present itself for a QTE get acquainted UNQTE meeting and exchange of views.

Since that time, as you know, I have accepted General de Gaulle's invitation to pay an official visit to Paris at the end of this month. Since that time also the deterioration in the general situation caused me to suspend active consideration of a meeting with Khrushchev. However Khrushchev has now again caused the subject to be raised with Ambassador Thompson and indicated his own desire for an early meeting. I am now therefore faced with

the

Drafted by:

5/15/61

EUR: GFR: AGVigdorman: gw.

Telegraphic transmission and
classification approved by:

The Acting Secretary

Clearances:

EUR - Mr. Feltner

EUR - Mr. Davis

S/S - Mr. Brubeck

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the problem of going ahead with this or of withdrawing from my previous indication of my willingness to do so during this period. In view of my heavy commitments here, with the Congress in session, it would seem that the only practicable arrangement would be for me to meet with Khrushchev for a day, probably in Vienna, immediately after my visit to Paris.

Since the possible meeting with Khrushchev would follow on my Paris visit, I informed President de Gaulle of the foregoing some days ago and have now received a positive response from him.

I have given Mr. Khrushchev an interim answer saying that while I still agree in principle that a meeting would be useful, I am not in a position to make a firm commitment at the moment but expect to be able to do so by the time he returns to Moscow, May 20. He has today informed me that he continues to have a positive interest in a meeting.

My present disposition is to proceed with the plans outlined above provided there are no further untoward developments meanwhile. I would assume you would share my view that since I have not previously met Khrushchev such an encounter would be useful in the present international situation.

If the meeting in fact takes place, I would expect to inform you of the content of these discussions with Khrushchev, which I anticipate will be quite general in character.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy.

FYI info to be held closest. Please inform NIACT date/time delivery. UNOTE
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